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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: LEBANON/FASCIST MUSLIMS

1. Summary: Editorial comments focused on the recent thwarted terrorist attack in the United Kingdom, and the ongoing conflict in Lebanon. One Emirati columnist in "Al-Ittihad" commented on how religion is used by some individuals to advance political agendas. Another columnist in "Akhbar Al-Arab" condemned the actions of those behind the terrorist plot, but also blamed President Bush for publicly tying Islam to Fascism. Finally, two columnists in "Al-Khaleej" questioned the United States' strategy in Lebanon, with one speculating that the U.S. will pursue sectarian divisions as they have in Iraq while the other insisted that the U.S. will not stop until Israel has completely defeated Lebanon. End Summary.

2. On 08/12 Emirati columnist Naser Al-Dhaheri wrote the following in his daily editorial in the Abu Dhabi-based semi-official Arabic-language daily "Al Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"We [Arabs] act as if we are the center of this great world, as if we have always been on the side of righteousness. All those other human minds, who struggle against diseases and the extinction of the universe, against the dangers of nature and the destruction of human rights, and contemplate God's great system of land, sea and space, are all hostages to this 'Arab' mentality, that has nothing to do with reason... There are many who dress and speak like religious people to achieve their own goals. Today evil has two faces: politics and religion. But between the two the only things that prevail are those based on interests and benefit..."

3. On 08/12 under the headline "Intentionally distorting Islam's image", the Abu Dhabi-based Arabic-language daily "Akhbar Al-Arab" (circulation 20,000) published the following:

"American interpretations of Islam are on the return, as President George Bush has intentionally lumped Muslims in with Fascists in commenting on the most recent conspiracy to bomb American airplanes. The suspects had been arrested, but before any investigation could be pursued or evidence collected, Bush rushed to launch his accusations against the Fascist Muslims. He could have taken precaution or at least prudence in such a situation, and called the plotters terrorists without resorting to calling them names or linking them to a particular faith or denomination. If this conspiracy is true, than it does not reflect the desires of any true Muslims as Islam does not tolerate the blood-thirsty. We wash our hands of the plotters and condemn them not because they are Muslims, but because they have no morals or relationship with true Islam. We reaffirm for the thousandth time that Islam and Muslims are innocent of any terrorist plots or acts. But how can one so define

terrorism, when the U.S. administration has not uttered a word against the Israeli terrorism against Lebanon and Palestine that has been seen by the entire world? We will not speak of Facist Jews, but of Fascist Zionists who have neither religion nor morals. And we say that the poison that flows throughout the region stems from Israel itself."

¶4. On 08/12 under the headline "Gambling and Adventure", columnist Saad Mehio wrote the following in the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000):

"... With the imminent division of Iraq into three states approaching in step with apparent sectarian civil war, the ambitious U.S. plan is about to approach its successful conclusion. The same framework is now being extended to Lebanon. The question is: will the U.S. be able to record a similar success there?"

¶5. On 08/12 the Sharjah-based Arabic-language daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) published the following in a lead editorial:

"'Lebanon must reflect Israel interests or not exist at all': this is what the U.S. is working towards, first through the Zionist war of annihilation against Lebanon and second by preventing all international and Arab attempts at a ceasefire through a humanitarian truce. This American-Zionist plan against Lebanon is not new; it was there long before the existence of Hezbollah... The false slogans of democracy and freedom have fallen through this month of aggression, as the killings and destruction of the Lebanese state continue and the U.S. Administration insists that the war criminals of the Zionist entity continue to escalate their aggression until all the Lebanese wave white flags."

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